

May 7, 2003

The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6035

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We urge your strongest possible support for legislation submitted by this Administration to enact a National Security Personnel System (NSPS) for the Department of Defense. The NSPS is what new generations and these perilous times demand -- a flexible and fair system of defense civilian personnel management that will significantly improve our ability to compete for and manage the human capital the Department needs and to provide the support that our military deserves. It has been well documented that the current civil service system needs reform. The provisions of NSPS remove key civil service processes from counterproductive personnel administration constraints, but honor and maintain the timeless framework of the merit system principles, preserve employee protections against prohibited personnel practices, observe veterans' preference, and ensure employees' rights to bargain collectively. NSPS is the result of years of Congressionally authorized defense personnel experimentation and would implement the blueprint shared with congressional staff over the past two years and published in the April 2, 2003, Federal Register.

Change is not easy, but it is the order of the day if we are to meet our national security challenges. We stand at a critical turning point this week in whether we will have the tools to meet that challenge and urge your most serious consideration of and support for the Administration's proposal. We are also sending copies of this letter to the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Government Reform Committee, the Senate Armed Services Committee, and the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee.

Sincerely,



Ray Coles James  
Director, Office of  
Personnel Management



Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.  
Director, Office of  
Management and Budget



Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense